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POLITICS

Steve Bannon, Chinese Critic Create Fund to Investigate Beijing

Initiative is latest effort by exiled businessman Guo Wengui to expose alleged wrongdoing and corruption by China's political and business elites



Guo Wengui and Steve Bannon unveiled their new effort at a lengthy press conference Tuesday.

PHOTO: CARLO ALLEGRI/REUTERS

By Cezary Podkul and Brian Spegele

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President Trump's former chief strategist Steve Bannon is teaming up with one of the Chinese government's fiercest critics on a \$100 million effort to investigate what they view as abuses of power by President Xi Jinping and the Communist Party.

Mr. Bannon unveiled the effort in a lengthy press conference Tuesday alongside exiled Chinese businessman Guo Wengui, who said he would provide the funding for the so-called "Rule of Law Fund" to investigate deaths and disappearances of Chinese executives, politicians and other public figures.

Mr. Bannon said he would volunteer to serve as the fund's chairman and oversee its operations, which he said would include hiring a professional staff. Details weren't provided of how the new

organization would operate, what cases it would pursue, or how Mr. Guo would pay for the initiative. Both men said the Trump administration wasn't involved in the effort.

China's embassy in Washington didn't immediately respond to a request for comment. Beijing has previously dismissed Mr. Guo's allegations as falsehoods and seeks his arrest.

The joint announcement Tuesday alongside a former member of Mr. Trump's inner circle marked the latest effort in Mr. Guo's long-running campaign to expose alleged wrongdoing and corruption by China's political and business elites.

The initiative could add to a list of complications in the U.S.-China relationship, which include deep divisions over trade, alleged technology theft by China and even Mr. Guo's presence in the U.S., where he is seeking asylum. Messrs. Trump and Xi are expected to meet the Group of 20 leaders' summit in Buenos Aires, which begins Nov. 30.

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